

Message Text

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PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /110 R

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NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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O 031722Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA
NSC WASHDC 0000

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT:PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY VANCE
TO SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON MIDEAST AIRCRAFT PROPOSALS

FOLLOWING IS PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY DELIVERED
BEFORE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 3 SUPPORTING
THE ADMINISTRATIONS PROPOSALS TO SELL AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL,
EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA:

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I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE ADMINISTRATION'S
PROPOSALS TO SELL JET AIRCRAFT TO THREE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES
-- 75 F-16 AIRCRAFT AND 15 F-15 AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL,
60 F-15 AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND 50 F-5 AIRCRAFT TO
EGYPT.

WE CONSIDER THESE PROPOSALS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO THE FOREIGN
POLICY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES. THESE SALES WILL
ENHANCE U.S. RELATIONS WITH THREE COUNTRIES THAT PLAY
CRITICAL ROLES IN THE ATTAINMENT OF TWO ESSENTIAL FOREIGN
POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST -- THE CONCLUSION OF
A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT THAT WILL PROVIDE THE BEST
GUARANTEE FOR ISRAEL'S LONG-TERM SECURITY, AND THE SUPPORT
OF MODERATE GOVERNMENTS THAT WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE
REGION.

THE THREE COUNTRIES INVOLVED ARE EACH OF EXCEPTIONAL
IMPORTANCE TO AMERICAN INTERESTS. OUR COMMITMENT TO
ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND WELL-BEING IS AN ENDURING IMPERATIVE
OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THIS ADMINISTRATION, LIKE
ITS PREDECESSORS, WILL REMAIN UNSHAKEN IN ITS DETERMINA-

TION TO HELP ISRAEL MEET ITS SECURITY REQUIREMENTS.

EGYPT IS ALSO CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT TO AMERICAN INTERESTS. UNDER PRESIDENT SADAT'S COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP, EGYPT IS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND IN THE PROMOTION OF MODERATE POLICIES GLOBALLY. THE UNITED STATES CLEARLY HAS AN INTEREST IN A SECURE EGYPT.

SAUDI ARABIA HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED ITS FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. SAUDI ARABIA STRONGLY SUPPORTS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. IT PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN PROMOTING A MODERATE ARAB CONSENSUS ON THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE. IT IS A MAJOR STABILIZING FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
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MATTERS AND IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THE PRICING AND SUPPLY OF OIL.

THE AIRCRAFT WHICH WE PROPOSE MEET AN IMPORTANT NEED FOR EACH OF THE THREE COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

ISRAEL IS STRONGER NOW THAN AT ANY TIME IN ITS HISTORY. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN OF MILITARY SUPERIORITY IN THE REGION, HOWEVER, ISRAEL WILL REQUIRE REPLACEMENTS FOR AIRCRAFT WHICH BECOME OBSOLESCE IN THE 1980S. THE F-15S AND F-16S ARE INTENDED TO ASSURE THAT ISRAEL RETAINS ITS LEAD IN ADVANCED MILITARY TECHNOLOGY.

EGYPT, HAVING ENDED ITS ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION, HAS NOT RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT SUPPLIES OF AIRCRAFT OR PARTS IN ABOUT THREE YEARS. EGYPT IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED ABOUT THREATS BOTH FROM THE WEST AND THE SOUTH. THE F-5S WILL HELP EGYPT PRESENT A CREDIBLE AIR DEFENSE POSTURE AND ASSURE CONFIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL ASSIST IT IN MEETING ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS.

SAUDI ARABIA NEEDS AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO PROTECT ITS VAST TERRITORY, INCLUDING WIDELY SCATTERED POPULATION CENTERS AND VULNERABLE OIL FACILITIES. SAUDI ARABIA, WHOSE ARMED FORCES ARE AMONG THE SMALLEST IN THE REGION, HAS A LONG HISTORY OF IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT WITH

IRAQ. IRAQI FORCES, WELL SUPPLIED WITH THE MOST MODERN SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT, WILL HAVE MORE THAN TWICE THE NUMBER OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT AS SAUDI ARABIA IN 1983, EVEN AFTER THE SAUDI F-15S ARE DELIVERED. MOREOVER, ON THREE OCCASIONS IN THE RECENT PAST, SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN
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ATTACKED BY FORCES FROM SOUTH YEMEN. THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM THIS QUARTER IS A MATTER OF CONTINUING SAUDI CONCERN.

WE ARE ASSURED THAT THE SAUDIS INTEND TO USE THE F-15 AIRCRAFT FOR THEIR OWN NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND NOT OTHERWISE. THE SAUDIS HAVE SAID THAT THEY DO NOT PLAN TO BASE THE F-15S AT ANY LOCATION THAT WOULD THREATEN OR PROVOKE ISRAEL.

IN OUR BEST JUDGMENT, THE PROPOSED SALES WILL MAINTAIN THE BASIC MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION. ISRAEL WILL RETAIN THE ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF. SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT WILL STRENGTHEN THEIR ABILITY TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST NATIONS DETERMINED TO UNDERMINE REGIONAL STABILITY.

IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT THESE TRANSFERS WILL SUPPORT THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT, WE NEED THE MAXIMUM COOPERATION, CONFIDENCE AND TRUST OF ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. THE PREREQUISITE FOR ADDRESSING THE HARD CHOICES FOR PEACE IS THE FEELING OF SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE ON ALL SIDES. THE CREATION OF THESE CONDITIONS IS OUR PRIME OBJECTIVE IN PROPOSING THE AIRCRAFT SALES.

OF COURSE, APPROVAL OF THESE SALES WILL NOT IN ITSELF BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THESE SALES WILL MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL LINKS THAT PERMIT US TO PLAY THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE PARTIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, FAILURE TO PROCEED WITH THE SALES WILL SERIOUSLY UNDERCUT THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND RAISE GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. READINESS TO WORK WITH MODERATE GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION.

I URGE THE CONGRESS TO JOIN THE ADMINISTRATION IN SENDING A MESSAGE TO THE MIDDLE EAST THAT IS CLEARLY AND FIRMLY SUPPORTIVE OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE COMMITTED THEIR

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COUNTRIES TO A FUTURE OF PEACE, TO ORDERLY ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND TO MODERATION.

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 03 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Event:
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